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PROGRAM	The Today Show	STATION	WRC-TV NBC Network
DATE	October 8, 1987	7:15 A.M.	CITY Washington, D.C.
SUBJECT	Interview with Bob Woodward		

BRYANT GUMBEL: Bob Woodward, an assistant managing editor of the Washington Post and investigative journalist extraordinaire, has a chilling new book out. It's about the business of running an intelligence operation and the excesses that resulted from Director Bill Casey's abuse of power. The title of the book is "Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-87."

That's been making headlines the world over. And for that, congratulations, Bob. Good morning.

BOB WOODWARD: Thank you.

GUMBEL: How much has the real story of "Veil" been lost amid the hoopla of your reported deathbed confession of Bill Casey?

WOODWARD: Well, some of it has. But I think people are starting to read it and realize it's a very serious, long book about government and how it was hidden from us.

GUMBEL: Let's talk about what you set out to do with "Veil." I mean when you put this outline together some time ago, long before Iran-Contra was even a thought, what is it you wanted to do?

WOODWARD: First of all, I wanted to understand Casey. It's the first time I've done a book where I had to deal or got to deal with somebody I was writing about. So I wanted to make sure he had his full say.

GUMBEL: You obviously needed something from him. What

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did he need from you that prompted him to meet with you over four dozen times?

WOODWARD: He was willing to do that, I think, because he knew I had a vast array of sources, I knew about covert action, I was getting a lot of details, much of what we put in the Washington Post at the time.

GUMBEL: So he wanted to shape the story?

WOODWARD: Shape it. It was defense. It was curiosity. I think he probably was informally attempting to conduct a plumbing operation.

GUMBEL: Give me, if you will, a character portrait of Bill Casey. Who is he?

WOODWARD: Well, he was somebody who -- you've got to always remember that he ran Reagan's campaign successfully in 1980; somebody who worked in OSS during World War II; a buccaneer, in every sense of the word, intellectually; and a man committed to action, action at all costs. If given a choice, he would say, "Do it. Try it."

GUMBEL: What about on the personal side? Was he a man easy to like, or respect, or loathe? What?

WOODWARD: Well, I have to say I did develop a lot of respect for him. But sometimes he would scream at me. Once he said, after I'd run a story about one of their operations, he said, "You'll have blood on your hands before this is over."

GUMBEL: You write that Bill Casey saw everything in terms of them against us. How is it that a man who was so extraordinarily intelligent, as he was, could view things in such dangerously simplistic terms?

WOODWARD: He -- I think that experience in World War II, where he established that there was verifiable evil, the Nazis, he came to feel that the Communists were the same. And he had this strategic view of the world. He looked around and he said, "Hey, where can we win one back?" He was tired of the defense. Of course, this is the Reagan election promise. So he went about to win one back.

Interestingly enough, he has not succeeded.

GUMBEL: But didn't it ever occur to him that by abusing his power in the manner he did, he was more like them than us?

WOODWARD: Oh, I think it did at moments. And I think

he had some self-doubt. But as he said in a number of speeches, some things are right, some things are wrong.

He made his selections, dedicated himself to reviving the agency, of doing what Ronald Reagan wanted.

GUMBEL: But he also said, and he quoted John Connally on this, that if you stay in any job more than two years, you become part of the problem.

Now, why couldn't he see that?

WOODWARD: Well, he's the one who told me that on an airplane ride we had one afternoon.

He missed it. And he clearly became not just part of the problem, but maybe the problem.

At the same time, I think a lot of people are going to read this and say, "Gee. He was a hero. He did what was necessary. Not only in terms of confronting the Communists, but in terms of dealing with terrorism."

GUMBEL: Is that what you think?

WOODWARD: No. My final conclusion is that it's a nation of law, of rules. And if you go back, it took me years to piece together what happened in the early era, early part of the Reagan Administration. And it's obviously that he was always deceiving, lying, breaking the rules and the law.

GUMBEL: That's extraordinary. Did he never see a conflict in that? I mean here's a man of the law, I mean here's a lawyer, who clearly had a blatant, who clearly had a blatant disregard for it.

WOODWARD: When you're dealing with verifiable evil -- terrorists, communists -- I think he said, "Look, we're going to only get the job done if we break these eggs."

GUMBEL: Your book paints a picture of a man who frequently abused his power and felt answerable to no one. To what extent was that because he viewed Ronald Reagan as a weak President? In his mind, weak.

WOODWARD: Well, first of all, they were soulmates. They had seen -- the same generation, two years difference in age, had seen four wars. Very, very pro-capitalist, anti-communist. And the President gave him a blank check and said, "Here you go, Bill. Take care of these problems."

GUMBEL: You said he was a student of Reagan, but never figured Reagan out. He obviously liked Reagan. Did he respect him?

WOODWARD: He had a lot of reverence for Reagan. At the same time, there are certain points, which I detail in "Veil," where Casey, like, I think, anyone, got mad at the boss. And one afternoon I remember Casey saying to me, "Reagan is not paying attention to Soviet expansionism. He is lazy. He is not" -- this was after a Contra vote was lost by two votes in the House.

GUMBEL: To give him his due, he had the task of rebuilding the Agency and rebuilding his [sic] image, and he did that.

Tomorrow when you come back, maybe we'll talk about how much he undid by some of his abuses.

Bob Woodward, thank you.